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## EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

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### CONFERENCE OF SCHOOLS IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

On April 16, at 1:30 P.M. in Leon Mandel Assembly Hall, the University of Chicago, will convene the annual Conference of the University of Chicago with the five hundred Co-operating secondary schools of the Middle West. The central theme of the 1915 Conference is "The Organized School Library in Relation to the Secondary School."

Following the general session, fourteen sections will hold separate meetings, considering the subject of the library in relation, respectively, to English, French, German, Greek and Latin, History, Home Economics, Manual Arts, Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics, Physical Education, Public Speaking, Botany and Zoölogy, commercial subjects, and Geography.

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### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON ECONOMY OF TIME

At Cincinnati the Committee on Economy of Time made its report.<sup>1</sup> The chairman of this committee is Superintendent H. B. Wilson, of Topeka, Kansas. The general nature of this report in comparison with other reports upon the same subject is worthy of comment. The report of a similar committee of the National Council of Education, which was published by the Bureau of Education, consisted in the formulation of the views of a number of educators regarding the points in the educational system on which there is unnecessary time spent through duplication or through the teaching of useless topics. In contrast to this method of procedure, which consists in the collection of opinions as to how economy in time might be achieved, the present committee has set out to gather a body of facts to serve as a basis for conclusions as to how time may be saved.

The first task to which the committee addressed itself consists in determining what is actually being done at the present time in the way of reducing the time spent in the education of the child, and in collecting another body of facts upon which can be based a determination of the

<sup>1</sup> The report is published as Part I of the *Fourteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* by the University of Chicago Press (1915).

minimum amount of content or of skill which should be demanded in the various school subjects. The bearing of such an investigation as this upon the economy of time is that it furnishes us the starting-point for experimentation or for a consideration of means by which such minimum requirements may be attained more efficiently than is at present done. This collection of facts furnishes only the starting-point for further investigation and experimentation.

It is worth while to comment briefly upon the directions in which further investigation might well be carried forward on the basis of the work which has already been done. One sort of study, which is very desirable to make, is suggested by the reports on reading and writing. The question was specifically raised in these reports regarding the relationship between a standard, which may be laid down for a school or a class as a whole, and the attainment of the individual members of the class. Mr. Courtis, the author of the Courtis Tests expressed his view on this matter as formulated in two principles. The first of these he calls *The Definition of Aim in Training*, and the second *The Limitation of Training*. Definition of Aim is attained through the setting up of a standard. The standard in his view constitutes the aim which should be reached by every individual child of the class to which the standard applies. This furnishes a perfectly specific goal, then, for every individual child. Limitation of Training means that when any individual child has reached the standard which has been laid down, further progress on his part as a result of training constitutes a waste of time. Such a child then should be excused from training in that subject and should have substituted for it something else.

This is one possible interpretation of the relation of individuals to class standards. It is not, of course, the only possible one, and before it has been finally accepted, it is necessary to conduct experiments to determine the amount of improvement which different children make under the same amount of training. It is well known that the amount of improvement which one makes at different stages in his practice curve is very different. At certain stages progress will be very rapid and at others it will be slow. It is also a general fact that different individuals will reach a stage of slow progress on a different plane of ability than will others. It would seem to be likely on a basis of these general principles that a child might be considerably below the standard in his ability and yet be at such a stage in his own curve of practice that it would not be profitable to give him further training at that particular time; while another child, who is considerably above the standard,

may be still at such a stage in his own practice curve that a slight amount of practice would give very rapid gain. In brief, it seems to be necessary from the point of view of economy of time to consider not merely where a child is with reference to the standard, but also how much effort would be required to produce improvement of a certain degree. We can only get the facts which are necessary to clear up this problem fully by studies of the rates of progress of children in the school subjects. It is to be hoped that such studies will be made by those who are in direct contact with the children in the schools.

The other type of investigation which was referred to concerns the various methods or forms of organization of the work which are most effective in bringing a class of pupils as a whole up to the standard which has been determined to be the essential requirement. This may be illustrated particularly from handwriting. It has not yet been sufficiently determined at what period of the children's elementary-school career drill in handwriting is most effective. It may very likely be that there are certain periods when it makes little difference whether drill is given or not, and that there are other periods at which the results of drill will be marked. A specific experiment along this line may be proposed. It seems likely that if the handwriting habit has been fairly well formed it is not necessary to continue much systematic drill to produce still further improvement. This hypothesis might well be tested by eliminating handwriting drill in the upper two or three grades, or at least by reducing it to one period a week. Since handwriting is an elementary-school subject this is not the place in which to elaborate such a proposal, but it is used here as an illustration of what might be done in other fields of work.

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#### THE SOCIETY OF COLLEGE TEACHERS

At the meeting of the Society of College Teachers of Education held in Indianapolis in 1910 Professor Bolton, who was then secretary of the Society, reported that it was no longer possible to issue the yearbook from initiation fees. The Society had reached the point where it included in its membership list nearly all those who were eligible to belong. Other arrangements were necessary, as Mr. Bolton made it clear, in order to carry on the work of the Society as it had been carried on before. At the request of the Executive Committee the *School Review* proposed a plan whereby the *Review* should become the organ of the Society for a period of a year and should publish the yearbook. The plan has now

been tried for a period of five years. A yearbook has been issued each year and the *School Review* has served as a medium of announcement and reports to the members of the Society.

At the last meeting of the Society the problem of continuing or discontinuing the relation between the *Review* and the Society was referred to the Executive Committee with power to act. After due deliberation the Executive Committee decided that it would be better not to continue the publication of the yearbook. The material is very difficult to put in form before the actual meeting of the Society. The experience of the past five years has shown that this material cannot be brought together long enough before the meeting to make possible any careful editing. In many cases the editors of the *Review* have been obliged to collect the material as well as arrange it for publication. It seems better for the Society, which has now developed to a point where it has a membership of 170, to proceed as scientific societies ordinarily proceed, canvassing in its discussions the material which naturally comes before it and allowing that portion of its program which commends itself as worthy of preservation to be published in the numerous organs which are now at hand for such publication.

From this time on, therefore, the Society will not undertake to issue a yearbook, and the formal relationship which has existed between the *School Review* and the Society will be discontinued. The *Review* will publish from time to time notices sent out by the secretary of the Society and it will contain those reports from the meetings of the Society which naturally are sent to its columns, but the work of the Society will now be published in a less concentrated form.

The Executive Committee also considered the desirability of differentiating the program of the Society in such a way as to give attention to the two fundamentally different interests within the organization. There are certain administrative problems which belong to college teachers as officers of a special group of institutions. On the other hand, no group of college teachers of education can come together without being absorbed in many of the scientific investigations which are not peculiar to their own class. In order to influence others through reports of a scientific type, it will undoubtedly be well to have general open meetings. On the other hand, the function of organizing college courses is so detailed and technical that in all probability the Society would profit by holding meetings where representatives of other interests were not present in any large numbers. The Executive Committee therefore instructed the officers to proceed with this dual type of

organization of the next meeting. If the members of the Society have other suggestions, these will be very gladly received by the officers in charge of the program for next year. Such suggestions may be sent either to the secretary of the Society, Dean G. M. Wilson, at Ames, Iowa, or to the president, Professor C. H. Judd, at the University of Chicago.

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### MILITARY TRAINING

Newspaper comment on the meeting of the Department of Superintendence has been notably directed to the discussion of the place of military training in the public schools. For the most part this comment has been of that hysterically sentimental sort in which the American editor, time out of mind, deals with any question of military defense. The phrase of the state superintendent of Pennsylvania recurs oftenest, that such teaching would be "organized insanity." Typical comment is the following: "To teach soldiering in the public schools must necessarily result in a comparatively short time in instilling in the minds of a more or less large percentage of the children a desire to put their training to the test, and as this can only be done satisfactorily by actual war there must needs arise in the future a considerable number of citizens inclined toward war."

Against such extraordinary logic the extremely moderate proposals of Secretary Garrison in his letter before the session sound very cool-headed indeed. "There is no proposal," he said, "that I know of that this country should build up a great military power for the sake of such power, nor that the civil authorities should be impugned, or interfered with, nor that any of the effects of militarism should be produced in this country."

In justice to the gravity of the question of military training in the public schools and in justice to a desire to see it sanely discussed, thoughtful men must protest against the absurd assumption that a slight discipline along military lines would immediately turn all the children in the country into fire-eating warriors. The valuable results of such training in improved physique and alertness in universities where military drill is compulsory, for instance, is a factor that should be considered, and the improvement in habits of promptness and obedience as well. If we must consider military training, let us consider it reasonably, at least; let us consider it, not only as a serious question of economy in national defense, but as a question of economy in the school curriculum. We shall certainly get nowhere by painting the proposal

as a Machiavellian attempt of the officers of the War Department to lead the nation astray by the exercise of their guile.

One of the best replies to the hysterical sentimentalist is a communication to the *New York Globe*. The writer quotes the state superintendent of Pennsylvania, as reported in the newspapers, to the effect that the introduction of military training would "develop a race of Amazons more fierce than militant suffragettes," that "military drill is injurious during the adolescent period," that "moral danger that results from militarism is still greater. It does not develop the sense of duty, but justifies spying, lying, forging letters and telegrams, and giving false signals to mislead the enemy!" Shades of Evander Childs! Why not tear down West Point and the thousands of other military schools throughout our noble land at once?

The late Evander Childs, one of the most widely known and successful educators in the profession, was an absolute, serious believer of military training "during the adolescent period" and in the public schools, not only from a hygienic standpoint, believing that order and system were the foundation of everything legitimate, but that "in order to command one must first learn to obey." This was the Childs keynote to success, and how successfully and practically correct it worked out can be attested to by not only the Childs healthy "race of Amazons" successfully working in the teaching profession today, who were also made no exception to the daily inspection and drills in the Childs schools, along with the boys, but by the Childs "boys and girls" in other lines of life. The Boy Scouts, the Baptist Boys' Brigade, the Campfire Girls, and all the other military "adolescent" organizations certainly have not been disrupted, to date, by any "moral danger" along these lines, nor in the "spying, lying, or forging of letters and telegrams to mislead the enemy."

Any army man can testify that no healthy recruit was ever injured by the "setting up" drills or "awkward squad" work necessary to establish that clean, soldierly carriage so noticeable even in the military school cots.

The *School Review* quotes thus extensively from this communication in the sincere desire to have the question discussed sanely and reasonably as the foregoing writer has discussed it, and in a desire to protest against the hysterical assumption that to introduce such training would make us one vast nation of bullies. Such bad logic does no good to the discussion, and makes educators and editors appear to the thoughtful layman slightly ridiculous.

*Dr. Finley's view.*—John H. Finley, president of the University of the State of New York and state commissioner of education, in speaking on the subject of the evening, said:

If, by "our educational system" you mean our elementary and secondary schools, and if by "war" you mean the hellish thing which is now going on in

Europe, the greatest savage game played under international rules, then I say that our educational system, in its basic, nation-wide principles, in its earth-wide racial heritages, and its vocational courses should not include those whose special purposes is preparation for war.

But if you will let me define war, I am ready to answer "Yes." I am a militarist in the primitive, ancient Aryan sense and I build my martial system on the same foundation as that which all European languages remember—the assembling, the organizing of individual men into militia.

It is the War Department that has dug the Panama Canal, that has made regions accessible, that has made others habitable, that has stayed pestilence and ministered most effectively to cities overwhelmed by disaster. I would have the conservation of health and the direction of education conceived of as functions of the War Department, scientifically, austere administered for the common good.

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#### VITALIZING THE ENGLISH COURSE

Under this heading the *Dubuque* (Iowa) *Herald* gives an extended report of the innovations recently made in the English department of the high school. The reorganization of the courses is distinctly an effort "to meet modern tendencies and demands. . . . On every hand teachers and educational directors are endeavoring to make the work of the school vital and real."

In this spirit the Dubuque High School has incorporated the following phases into its work:

*The magazine.*—A study of magazines from their origin up to 1915, with especial stress on the modern, the material being obtained from the large list available in the Public Library.

*The newspaper.*—Here, the aim is to study the materials and methods of present-day newspapers—the Chicago papers being used as texts. The student is also taught to read the paper in the busy man's way, and to form his own judgment. "Current Events" is taken in some of the classes, and a recitation based on it.

*Modern novels, essays, etc.,* are utilized in the home reading.

*Versification.*—As the name implies, the production of poetry is not sought—but a quickening of appreciation for what has been written by becoming aware of the art of making verses. Merit is recognized by posting or publication in the school paper.

The course in dramatization and the drama has staged student versions of *Silas Marner*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, a photoplay of the *Ancient Mariner*, the *Odyssey*, *The Lady of the Lake*, *War and Peace*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. "In the drama the Shakespearean work is rein-

forced by modern work. Notices of good plays are posted and extra credit given for attendance. In order to make this possible, chaperoned parties are organized, thus enabling the student to see good plays at a reasonable price. The best photoplays are also recommended."

The department of English also co-operates with other courses. Poems on birds and beasts are posted and discussed in the laboratory; debates are to be held on the relative values of different studies; the class in cooking was called upon to furnish the repast for a presentation of the banquet scene in *Macbeth*; outlines are put into form by the type-writing department, and some attempt is made, through visits and themes descriptive of Dubuque industries, at vocational guidance.

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#### A UNIQUE PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Most interesting has been the general indorsement by newspapers of President Taft's proposal for a national university, in his speech before the National Education Association, which, curiously enough, came on the same day as the report by the house committee of the bill for that purpose. Papers so wide apart as the *Boston Transcript* and the *Seattle Times* have given, not only thoughtful consideration to the scheme, but a considerable indorsement. The editorial in the Seattle paper is typical of the attitude of editors:

The former President does not favor a teaching university at the republic's capital, but rather a college where educational systems shall be subjected to the examination of experts for approval or criticism.

He believes that such a scheme would redound to the benefit of the entire educational scheme of the country, would eliminate the "fustian," and assure taxpayers the value that they desire for the expenditure of their money.

His plans for this university are modest and contemplate rather an extension of the powers of the bureau of education now in existence than the formation of a new organization distinct from any other branch of present government activity.

Viewed in this light the proposition has much to commend it and his proposal eliminates the objections of many critics of the national university idea.

There has been noted, among many who have discussed this question in the past, a feeling that the teaching of youth is a peculiar and valued prerogative of the several states. Development, it has been declared, should be toward the enhancement of the state institutions, rather than the elevation of a federally supported university to a dominant position over all other schools of learning in the country.

Every state that has a flourishing university has been disinclined to see created in Washington, D.C., a vast institution of learning that would tend to lure away the prize students from the various commonwealths.

However, a college for educational systems and for educators, designed to promote efficiency by co-ordinating the best in the systems employed in the several states, would be no departure from present federal practice. It would be merely an amplification of the work now being accomplished by the bureau of education.

If conducted along broad-gauge lines, such as would be laid down by such an administrator as Professor Taft, it should be a valuable guide and assistant, not only to earnest educational workers, but to the taxpaying public as well.

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### THE MOVIES AND THE SCHOOLS

A bill before the California legislature recalls the progress of the moving picture as an educational device. The California measure provides that the state should maintain a "visual education" bureau in conjunction with the California schools, providing both motion pictures and stereopticon films for school use. The plan has the indorsement of educators throughout the state. The case for the "movies" is succinctly put by President C. H. Carson, of the Visual Education Association of California, as follows:

We are on the eve of a tremendous development in the application of visual aids in educational work. We do not yet begin to realize how much of a place the motion picture will make for itself as an aid to understanding and interest in the problems of the classroom. It is not claimed that it will replace the textbook or the teacher, but it will have its part to play (and a big part) in clarifying the abstract ideas of the student and in adding a useful instrument to the equipment of the teacher.

Writing in the *Educational Review* for February, Miss Alice J. Du Breuil gives a sketch of the spread of the demand for "visual instruction," of which the California bill is a late instance. One of the earliest bureaus of visual education was that organized last year at the University of Wisconsin by Professor W. H. Dudley. This bureau possesses about 15,000 slides and 220 films, and the number is being constantly increased. Typical films show the growth of plants, bird-life, the staging of high-school classics, like *The Merchant of Venice*, and so on. The films are distributed through the university extension department under a regular schedule of routing.

The University of Minnesota supplies a film, according to this article, called "A Lesson in Etiquette," for the instruction of students,

in which eight decorous students observe all the rules of etiquette, and eight of an opposite type break them. The University of Nebraska, in films shown to more than 100,000 people last year, teaches the cooking of wholesome meals, the sanitation of homes and babies, and even the evils of indigestion and the work of the heart, through a combination of X-ray and moving-picture machines. The Sheffield Scientific School has discovered the value of the moving picture in technical training, and a Philadelphia bureau is teaching vocational work by films which show the exact processes in the manufacture of goods. Even in far-off India the Maharajah Gaikwar of Baroda, like the United States Department of Agriculture, is educating the people, by means of traveling moving-picture shows.

Miss Du Breuil concludes: "For educational, industrial, social, religious, and moral purposes, it behooves every school to have a motion-picture machine, and every portion of the country to have a centralized distributing agency from which a weekly delivery of films and slides is made to every school. It is easier to undervalue than to overvalue moving-picture shows as a means of giving instruction in school or out."

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#### PRACTICE TEACHING IN NEW YORK

New York announces practical co-operation between Teachers College of Columbia University and the city Board of Education. Teachers in training from the college are to assist in the prevocational schools of the city, their work being under the immediate direction of the regular teachers in charge. The purpose of the city authorities is to secure the individual attention necessary for pupils in music, drawing, sewing, millinery, dressmaking, and other allied subjects. For Teachers College this arrangement secures a larger field for practice teaching. College programs are to be arranged so that in any school at least two students (prospective teachers) will be present during the time that prevocational work is given. These assistants will have charge of small groups of pupils, and will participate in making the plans for the work and in giving instruction to the whole class; but their main duty, from the point of view of the city authorities, will be individual instruction. They are to serve without pay, of course, the compensation being in the opportunity thus open for contact with actual school conditions.